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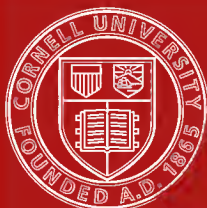
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SKETCHES  
OF  
EARLY LIFE AND TIMES

IN  
KENTUCKY, MISSOURI AND ILLINOIS,

AS WRITTEN BY  
MAJ. ELIJAH ILES.

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## PREFACE.

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In presenting the following pages for the perusal of his friends and acquaintances, some of whom have traversed a good part of the journey of life with him, and have been eye-witnesses to much here narrated, the author feels that it is necessary to say but little in the way of preface. He has aimed at no literary excellence, and is aware that his work would be open to criticism if perused for that purpose. But he feels that those into whose hands it will come will accept it for what it is—a simple narrative of the wanderings and incidents of a long life spent in what was, at the beginning of that life, the very outpost of civilization, but which has become before its close the center of population, of wealth, of industry, of commerce, and of political power in our beloved country.

In recalling the incidents and events of the past, and following in his memory the trail of his wanderings, he has been able to divert his mind from its despondent and depressed moods, and thus enjoyed, to some extent, the little life left in the old body.

THE AUTHOR.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., July 1, 1883.



## CHAPTER I.

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*My Ancestors and Birthplace—Life in Eastern Kentucky—A Limited Education—A Hermit's Life—Run Over by a Bear—Cattle Raising—A Desire to Emigrate.*

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The writer was born in the state of Kentucky, March 28th, 1796, at which date all west of the Alleghany mountains was little other than a wilderness.

My grandfather, William Iles, was an emigrant from England, and my grandmother was of Welsh descent.

My father, Thomas Iles, was born in Pennsylvania in the year 1766. After the death of his mother, his father having married a second time, he became restless, and determined to leave his father, depend on himself for the future, and hoe his own row. At the age of seventeen years an opportunity presented itself. His father furnished him with a good horse and outfit of clothing, and sent him on a trip to collect money. He got the money, and thinking himself amply provided put out to Virginia, and emigrated to Kentucky with a family by the name of Trunibo, in the year 1788. When he got to Kentucky, the Indians were stealing horses and killing the inhabitants, and for a while his time was occupied in skirmishes after the Indians, driving them across the river into the then territory of Ohio.

Finally the Indians stole his horse; his money was used up, and his clothes worn and rusty. He then went to work for wages in summer and to school in winter, paying for his board by his work mornings, evenings, and Saturdays. By this course he got sufficient education to enable him to teach school. He then taught school in winter and worked on farms in summer. He pursued this course until the year 1792, when he married Betsey Crockett, who was of Irish descent.

After his marriage, my father, with two of my mother's brothers, John and Robert Crockett, and others, formed a colony and settled on the border, in Eastern Kentucky, in a rough, hilly section, on Slate Creek, one of the headwaters of the Licking, now comprised in the county of Bath.

My earliest recollections bring to my view a Buck-eye cabin of one room, in which we lived, that stood on the bank of a clear stream of water, the bed of which was of flat limestone rock and pebbles. The bottom-land surrounding the cabin was covered with a heavy growth of beech timber, so thick that it darkened the sunlight. The upland was a varied growth of timber, not so thick, but covered with a dense thicket of cane. Our neighbors were not so near that we could see the smoke from each other's cabins. This district, at that day, was truly a wild and backwoods country. Bear and deer were so plentiful that we could often see them from the door of our cabin. We could not raise hogs until the bear and panther were thinned out, as they would kill and eat the pigs. But we made good use of the bears by killing them and using the meat as we do pork.

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My mother, with her wool cards, spinning wheel, and loom, manufactured all the clothing worn by herself and the family, except the buckskin pants worn by the men and boys. All these were made into garments with thread spun by herself. No other kind of apparel was used at that day.

We had to make out with very little, as almost every article used about the house had to be brought from Virginia to Kentucky on pack-horses. Our tableware consisted of pewter plates, pewter dishes and spoons, and japanned tin tumblers. We made much use of gourds for drinking cups. Our cooking utensils were a small dinner pot, oven, skillet, and frying-pan.

Our bread was always corn bread, mostly baked on a board and called johnny-cake, or in the ashes, when it was called ash-cake. Our meat, consisting of bear meat, turkey, venison, squirrel, quail and fish, was often roasted before the fire.

One day, when my father and Uncle Robert were burning brush and logs, preparing the ground for raising corn, they had their guns along and killed some squirrels. My sister, then in her sixth year, and myself four, roasted one with the skin on, and were picking it to pieces and eating it when we were discovered. We got a little scolding and were sent back to the house. This was the last of our squirrel baking.

My mother died in the year 1802, leaving five children—Polly, Elijah, William, Washington, and Betsey—the youngest 8 days old.

After the death of my mother, my aunts Carlyle and Harper took my sisters and brother Washington to their homes in Woodford county, 66 miles distant, and

my aunt Crockett took my brother William and myself for a short time, until my father went to Winchester, Virginia, where he had a sister living (Mrs. Barnett). There he bought and brought home a negro woman (recommended by his sister) to keep house and care for brother William and me. She proved to be one of the very best of negro women—a good cook, who kept our house and clothes in good order. We were taught to call her Aunt Milly, and to obey her.

Our nearest place of trade was Lexington—60 miles. We often got out of pins, and had to use in their place the thorn from the haw bush, which was a good substitute.

My aunt Crockett and the neighbor women would collect at our house every spring and fall, and make up our summer and winter clothes.

The first time I went to school I was boarded out four miles from home, two winters. The only education we received consisted of our letters, spelling, reading, writing, and some little arithmetic. After this, I was sent fifteen miles from home to a better school, for two winters. There was seldom a school in summer, as most every child able to work was kept at home to help in the farm work. I never got far enough to study English grammar. My father was a good scholar, and taught me writing and arithmetic at home, and as there were now children enough in the neighborhood, I taught school one winter to perfect myself in what little education I had.

After living eight years a widower, my father married the widow Wheeler, with two children (Samuel and Eliza), and soon after bought mill property and

*With Grandfather's money*

moved to Licking river, leaving myself, the black woman, and a negro man to carry on the farm. During the war of 1812 he was sheriff of Bath county, and I acted as his deputy.

In 1816, I wanted to be doing something for myself, and my father let me have \$300 <sup>monies</sup> ~~in~~ money. With this I bought one hundred yearling calves at less than \$3.00 each, and drove them several miles beyond all settlements to the headwaters of Little Sandy river, in a mountainous, wild, and rugged country. The cliffs were very precipitous, overhanging so as to form good shelter for my cattle in the winter. The valleys between the bluffs were from five to fifteen miles long, and from bluff to bluff about three hundred yards wide. In these valleys I wintered my cattle, by changing them from valley to valley as they ate out the bunch grass. They got poor in winter, but by herding them on high land in summer they would get very fat. I camped and staid with my cattle three summers and two winters, and although my only companions were my gun, horse, dog, and cattle, I did not feel lonely. I had an object in life.

Game was plenty. My father or some one of the family would visit me about once a month, and I would load them with bear, deer, or turkey, to take home.

One day I got badly scared. I shot a bear in the loins. It made a terrible squalling and snapping at the place where it was wounded, and tried to drag itself to a thicket. I started to head him off until I could load my gun, and had reached a point about ten feet below him. He made no halt, but came straight at me with his mouth open. The hill being very steep and the ground covered with frost, my feet slipped and I fell on

my knees. I struck at him with my gun and threw myself forward on the ground. He ran over my back, and made no stop until he reached the thicket. I must have struck him a hard blow, as the stock of the gun was badly shattered; the lock and breech, however, were all right. After loading my gun I went to within ten steps of him, but for my life I could not take aim. I had the "buck thumps." I had to go thirty steps back to get a rest for my gun.

My living while in camp was very simple. My bread consisted of johnny-cake, which I baked on a board, or of ash cake, which was baked in the ashes. I liked my meats stewed, and would often stew together in the one little pot I had, a mixture of turkey, bear, venison, squirrel, and a piece of fat bacon. I never used plates, as they would need washing, but in lieu would use a large chip or piece of bark, and would change it every meal for a new one. My lunch, when out hunting or herding cattle, was jerked venison and fat side meat—the venison I ate for bread and the bacon for meat.

There were a number of saltpetre caves in the vicinity of where I had my cattle, and the men who came out to work them would often visit me in passing. Sportsmen from the vicinity of Lexington and Paris—the Bedfords, Basses, and others—would come out in the fall to hunt and would make my camp their headquarters, and whilst they were with me I had good living and no cooking to do, as they always brought a negro along to keep camp, and pack-horses to pack home the game. As the game was plenty, they would return to their homes well laden with bear, venison and turkey.



I sold my cattle in the fall of 1818. Such cattle as would only sell at that day for eight to ten dollars each, would now bring more than forty dollars per head.

I now heard of a new country in Missouri called the Boone's Lick, about six hundred miles distant, represented to be very fine. By this time I felt well weaned, and determined to emigrate to this new country, where I expected I would have to depend on myself for the future, and that, too, among strangers, far away from all my kin. This was before the government had offered the land in Missouri for sale.

After arranging my money matters I had six hundred dollars. This seemed to me a big pile, and with it I left Kentucky, which was still new, for this wilder country, in October of 1818, in company with a young man by the name of Wiley.

*This is a falsehood all though.  
wonder what the following  
chapters will be.*

## CHAPTER II.

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*A Horseback Ride to Missouri—The Boone's Lick Country—A Veritable Land of Goshen—Keeping Store—A Novel Safe—The First Temperance Pledge in Missouri—Still Seeking the Frontier—At Death's Door—A Distressed Family—A Frontier Fort—Return to Kentucky.*

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I will now proceed to relate some of the numerous incidents and events of my life, from the time I left Kentucky for the Boone's Lick in Missouri to the present year, 1883. What was then known as the Boone's Lick country lay on both sides of the Missouri river, in Howard county, and extended west to the Indian boundary. It embraced about one-third of the state.

Starting on my route, I took the road called the "iron-works road," leading in nearly a direct line from Owensville, in Bath county, through the rich lands of Montgomery, Bourbon, Clarke, Fayette, Woodford, and Franklin counties, to Frankfort, Ky.

The iron-works had been erected by Col. Thomas Dye Owens, of Baltimore, at a very early day, and in a very moderate manner, for the purpose of smelting the iron ore and casting it into ten-gallon sugar kettles, to be used in making sugar from the maple tree, on which we were wholly dependent for our sugar, having no communication with New Orleans. They also cast

pots, skillets and ovens for cooking purposes, as we could get none without packing from Virginia, the Indians having placed an embargo on the Ohio river.

The above mentioned road passed between the towns of Mt. Sterling, Paris, Winchester, and by the town of Lexington, and was made and used to haul the material from the furnace. The legislature passed an act to allow the farmers to fence the road, but they were compelled to erect gates and let the public use the road as a thoroughfare.

Passing through the above counties I was charmed with the fertility of the soil, the sightly appearance of the country, its beauty, and the luxuriant growth of farm products, and I determined to find a section equal in beauty, fertility and extent; where I could have large, square cornfields, and not little zig-zag ones as we had where I was raised, and where we had numerous short rows to plow. All of which I found both in Missouri and Illinois.

I crossed the Ohio river at Louisville (not a very large town then) into the State of Indiana, and took the trail to Vincennes, over a hilly, rough, and poor country. Gov. Harrison, afterwards President, then resided at Vincennes. Leaving Vincennes, I went up on the east side of the Wabash river thirty miles to a Quaker settlement; then crossed the river into the territory of Illinois, and came down on the west side to the St. Louis trail. From thence to St. Louis the country was a level prairie, with but few inhabitants on the route. In fact, there were no settlements of any extent except at Louisville, near Vincennes, and at St. Louis.

At St. Louis I crossed the Mississippi into the then territory of Missouri. St. Louis at that day contained

a little more than two thousand inhabitants, most of whom were French, and the French language was mostly spoken. At that time there was but one town on the Mississippi above St. Louis (Louisiana). There was a town at Alton, one mile and a half back from the river. There were but two towns on the Missouri—St. Charles, twenty miles, and Franklin, one hundred and sixty miles west of St. Louis.

After leaving the vicinity of St. Charles, the trail led for about eighty miles through a district in which there was scarcely an inhabitant, other than a few settled on the road to accommodate travelers. Daniel Boone then lived in this district, on Luter creek, six miles off the road, with his son and son-in-law.

When we got within thirty miles of Franklin we found a timbered country, much like the lands about Lexington, Ky., pretty well filled with squatters, who had made small improvements and were awaiting the sale of the public land. These settlers were mostly from Kentucky and Tennessee. The town of Franklin was filled with speculators, also awaiting the public sale.

This district was called the Boone's Lick country, and was comprised in Howard county, which then extended from near St. Charles west for more than two hundred miles to the Kansas river, or the Indian boundary line. The county as now organized includes this first colony of settlers. Fayette is the county seat.

We reached Franklin on a Saturday afternoon. On Sunday we strolled about the town and bathed in the Missouri river. On Monday morning Mr. Wiley, my companion, told me that he had decided that Ken-

tucky was a new enough and a good enough country for him, and that he would return there. I said I would not be satisfied until I had explored more of the country and had paid a visit to the most extreme western cabin in the United States, which was only about thirty miles above Franklin, and above the present site of Boonville. This cabin I found not far above the mouth of Chariton river.

After breakfast, we saddled our horses and rode half a mile to where the road forked. Here we gave each other a good hand-shaking, wishing each other all the health, prosperity and enjoyment this world could afford us, and then separated—he turning his face to the east and I mine to the west. After we separated I felt lonely enough. I was in a section of country where all were entire strangers to me; not one of them had I ever seen before. This set me to thinking, and I thought—and I thought—and I thought—but did not halt until I got to that outside cabin. From there I retraced my steps, and crossed the Missouri river below the mouth of the Chariton. Here I found a colony of about a dozen Tennesseans, who had enclosed in one common field more than a thousand acres of prairie bottom—government land, designated by turning rows for each one to till. This was a grand sight. I had never seen such an immense field and such large ears of corn. Where I was raised the corn was small, the soil being thin. Here you could have a corn row to plow more than a mile long, without stones, roots or stumps to interfere. I again crossed the river at Arrow Rock, ten miles above Franklin, which I soon reached.

The morning after my return to Franklin, I was seated at the breakfast table by the side of a merchant

who was also clerk for the Receiver of the land office, and in course of conversation he invited me to call at his store, saying he would give me all the information he could as to the best place to buy for farming or for investment. He seemed solicitous to know where I was born and raised and how my time had been employed from infancy up; whether I had any acquaintance in the Boone's Lick country, and what was my education. My answer was that my education was very limited, and, in short, I gave him a full history of myself as I have already written out for this sketch and therefore need not repeat, and concluded by informing him that I had not a single acquaintance in the Boone's Lick country; that I had come to buy me a home, for the sole purpose of farming and to set up and do for myself.

The result was, that as the clerk he then had was about to leave him, he proposed (green as I was) to employ me in his store for one month, or, if we suited each other, until the land sales. I got along in the store better than I had expected, and at the close of the month, in lieu of thirty dollars a month as agreed upon, he paid me fifty. I must have given him good satisfaction, for he then employed me at fifty dollars a month. He also agreed that before the land sales took place he would allow me time to select lands for myself; and as his time was to be much employed in the land office, he engaged another young man (as green as I was), from Tennessee, to aid me in the store. This young man's name was James M. White. We soon became much attached to each other; and as we each had our own row to hoe and wished the confidence of business men, we pledged ourselves never to go into a billiard, drink-

ing, or gambling saloon, unless on business. This young man afterwards went to the lead mines below St. Louis and carried on the smelting of lead ore. He was very successful, and soon bought a steamboat in which to ship his lead to market, and named it the James M. White—a name which became famous and familiar to all western river men. He died about thirty years ago, but I believe the name of James M. White is still on a Mississippi steamboat.

I did not buy at the sales any of the land I had selected, as I was overbid. After the first land sales, money was sent to my employer to invest in land, and he got me to explore the country and make selections. This gave me a good opportunity to make selections for myself, and I bought and sold several tracts, on one of which I realized a profit of one thousand dollars.

The Receiver's office was in a room over the store, and as he had no safe, and nothing but a trunk to keep the money in, it was done up in packages and handed to me for safe keeping. I did not like to take the responsibility; but he said he knew what he was about, and wished me to take the care of it. My "safe" was a barrel filled with scraps of paper and set under the counter, in the bottom of which the packages were placed. Not even my companion White knew I had the money. In my "safe" I would have more than \$100,000 at a time. Lands at that day were sold at two dollars per acre—one-fourth cash, and one-fourth in two, three and four years. Hard times stopped us from making money, and unless the payments were promptly made the land was forfeited to the general government. But when we thought we were all

swamped, congress passed an act allowing us to relinquish. For instance, if a man had bought a section, he was allowed to give up three-fourths and apply the payment made to save the one-fourth.

I liked that part of Missouri where I had settled. It seemed no better lands could be found, and I liked the settlers; they were mostly from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, and a more hospitable, honest, and industrious class never settled in any new country. The three years I remained there I had no one to care for but myself, and I had uninterrupted enjoyment, with nothing to mar it up to the time I was married. Married life brought also its enjoyments and comforts, but yet it brought its cares.

After remaining in Missouri three years I resolved to visit my native home in Kentucky; but before doing so wished to explore more of Missouri, so that on my return I would be better prepared to select the place for my permanent home. A young man named Evans, from Kentucky, joined me in this exploring trip. We prepared ourselves for camping, with some bread in our wallets, cornmeal for making corn bread, and salt. For meat, we depended on game, such as deer, turkey, and prairie chicken, and as we both were good marksmen, there was no danger of suffering.

About one hundred miles above the settled portion of Missouri a colony had just been started, mostly yet living in camps. The men had gone up in the spring and had raised small patches of corn without fencing, and had just moved their families and were helping each other to erect their cabins, some of which were already built. This colony was on the north side of



the Missouri river, opposite and below the mouth of the Kansas. The settlement was in a string nearly twenty miles long. The land was well watered, sightly, and none better.

We stopped at the outermost house of this settlement, near the Indian border line. Here a young man joined us, and we extended our trip into the then Indian Territory, traveling several days beyond the border line, where we found still a sightly country and fertile land. On our return, before we got back to the cabin, I was taken sick with a most violent fever. As it was more than a hundred miles to a doctor, and my suffering excruciating, it was supposed I must die. Whilst I lay in great agony at the cabin, where I was cared for by the woman, the young men, who were waiting until I should die, amused themselves in killing beaver, otter, and deer. After I had been sick four or five days I remembered a spring of ice-cold water that I had passed on an Indian trail, a half a mile off, and as I had not lost much strength, I put out to the spring, where I lay down with my face over the water and drank until I could not swallow another drop. As soon as the water warmed in my stomach, I cast it up. This I did a number of times, until my thirst was allayed and the perspiration began to flow. About this time a clap of thunder, accompanied by lightning, warned me that I had better not have it rain on me while in a perspiration; and although I did not crave for more water, I drank as much as I could possibly swallow, and started for the cabin. The perspiration ran in streams from my body and limbs, every finger dripping with it, and my shoes were almost filled with perspiration. You

could have tracked me on the trail. When I reached the cabin the fever had left me, and I had no more. Next morning I was able to travel.

Our aim now was to cross the Missouri river and go down on the south side. There were no settlers on the south side for more than one hundred miles below, to the vicinity where Boonville is now located. We knew there was a fort on the south side, below the Kansas river, called Fort Osage, commanded by Col. Sibley, where we could cross. We intended to strike the Missouri below the Kansas and meander down until we found the fort, but before reaching the river we found a family living in a tent; they had not yet erected their cabin. We stopped with them for the night. The father, mother, and three children were all sick with the chills, and the next morning the young man with me had a crick in his back. He seemed to suffer intensely—most as badly as I did with the fever. Of course we had to stay for a time, and I had my companion and the family to care and provide for. There was nothing to begin with except some milk and honey, but I soon killed some squirrels and prairie chickens. Quail had not yet emigrated that far. The corn in his corn patch was just ripe enough to pound into meal, for which I had a mortar, with a pestle and sweep. The first batch I pounded I blistered my hands, and was then in a bad fix to pound more; but the woman made me some pads to go on my hands, which answered a good purpose. I had to stop here a week until my companion was able to travel. The day before we left I went twenty miles to a trader's, who had some flour, cornmeal, and a few groceries and

patent medicines. Here I bought some flour, tea, and medicine, and also saw a friend who promised to go up and wait on the family. I had an Indian trail to travel, and when within a half mile of the camp, on my return, a deer jumped across my path, which I shot from my horse. It was only crippled. Leaping from my horse, I laid the gun down and ran to it, cut its throat, cut out the entrails, and packed it to the camp. There I dressed it, and next morning left the family well provided with eatables.

From here we followed down the windings of the Missouri and found the fort, about twenty miles below the mouth of the Kansas river. The officers sent soldiers with a barge to ferry us and our horses over. We were made welcome, and our horses as well as ourselves were well cared for. The wives of the officers seemed overjoyed to see some one, besides their husbands and the soldiers, that they could make inquiries of as to what was going on in the settled and civilized parts of the United States. Whilst they were located on the frontier and in forts, they saw no one aside from their husbands and soldiers, with occasionally a few trappers and fur traders passing up and down the Missouri river. My companion was a fluent talker, and kept them well entertained in answering their questions and relating matters that had or were transpiring in the (to them) outside world. They did everything they could to entertain and make it pleasant for us. Our clothes were washed and well done up, the buttons sewed on and the rips mended, and our socks darned. We stopped with them a week, and enjoyed our visit to the fort very much. On our way down the river we

camped one night, before we got to the settled part, in the vicinity where Boonville is now situated.

The stores in Franklin were mostly branches of Lexington (Ky.) houses. Being now out of business, I was preparing to visit my kin in Kentucky. At that day the merchants went east in December and rode to Philadelphia on horseback to buy their goods. These were hauled over the mountains and sent by water to St. Louis, and again carried by wagons one hundred and eighty miles to Franklin. There were no banks in that part of the State, and the merchants carried their money in belts around their bodies or in saddlebags. I was employed by the merchants to remain until January and bring to Lexington what money might be taken in the stores.

*Not much improved.*

### CHAPTER III.

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*Off again for the West—Visit to Vandalia—The Sangamon Valley—  
Good-bye to Missouri—Illinois via Salt River—A Colony on the  
Snye—Arrival at Springfield—Bringing Goods from  
St. Louis—The First Store in Sangamon—Some  
Early Settlers—A Rude Court House—  
The Whipping Post—Settling the  
County Seat Question—  
A Large County.*

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After a short visit in Kentucky with my relatives, I became restless, and returned to Missouri accompanied by my step-brother, Samuel Wheeler, who, upon my recommendation, obtained employment in a store.

In passing through Illinois I heard of a district called the Sangamon valley, north of St. Louis one hundred miles, then just settling, said to be very fertile. As I thought Missouri would remain a frontier state during my life time, I decided to visit and explore more of Illinois, and if I liked it and found it as represented, I would quit Missouri and fix my permanent abode in Illinois, as it would be more of a thoroughfare, more interior, and nearer a market. We were told commissioners had just staked out a road from a point forty miles west of Vincennes to Vandalia, thence to the Sangamon valley. This determined us to diverge from our course, follow the stakes, and visit that new country. The stakes were set far apart, but the trace was easily followed, as the ground was soft and the

wagon hauling the stakes made deep ruts. We favored our horses by walking and leading them much of the way. We reached the Kaskaskia river, opposite Vandalia, after dark, and after wading an overflowed bottom midside in water to our horses, we swam them across the river, by the side of a canoe, to the town.

We found the capital to be an isolated place, fixed by the convention for twenty years beyond the settled parts, that it might be more central to the state. (It is now moved to Springfield, where it will doubtless remain forever.) We found the residents of the new capital mostly Germans, there being but few others in the town aside from state officers. The German colony brought their priest. It consisted of several families. One of them, by the name of Ernst, had erected and was keeping the only hotel in the town. Many of the Germans died in a few years. When I got to the hotel I had an intense headache. The priest put a few drops of medicine on lumps of sugar, which after being dissolved in my mouth acted like a charm, and the ache was gone.

From Vandalia we followed the stakes and struck Gov. Edwards' war trace, now dim, thirty miles south of the Sangamon river. From this point we could see the timber of Sugar and Horse creeks, on the headwaters of the Sangamon. The weather was balmy, but soon a norther struck up with a heavy rain, which froze as it fell, and we were soon enveloped in a sheet of ice. It was getting dark and the road difficult to trace, and we began to doubt if we could find a house, as there were but few settlers and all located off the road. We could see the outlines of the timber on either side, but

no house. We traveled some distance between the timber of Sugar and Brush creeks, and some time after dark we saw a bright light, more than a mile off the road, in Sugar creek timber. This caused our hearts to jump, and we made for the light. When we got to the cabin we found it occupied by a young married couple named Richie. They had just moved into it, and had not stopped the cracks; it afforded but little protection against the cold. Our horses were put in a rail pen and fed on the ground, and we were made as comfortable as we could be by keeping a rousing fire. They had but one bed, and could spare us no covering. We got our clothes well dried and lay on the floor, our feet to the fire and saddles for our pillows. In the morning we found the bed and floor covered with snow. It was bitter cold, and the air was filled with drifting snow. Mr. Richie told us we could find more comfortable quarters at a Mr. Funderburk's, some few miles off across the prairie, who had built a good cabin a year before, to reach which we had to face the drifting snow and bitter cold. On getting to the cabin we found it comfortable, and stopped one day and night; and as the ground was soft and the waters high, we gave up further prospecting. The next morning the storm had ceased and a bright sun melted the ice. This was in April. The grass was twelve inches high—it had not been hurt by the sleet—and as it waved in the breeze it was a grand sight to look at.

On our return to the main road to St. Louis we traveled forty miles without passing a house to Mr. Paddock's, then to Edwardsville, St. Louis, St. Charles, and thence to my home in Franklin, then a flourishing

town in Missouri, afterwards washed away and sunk, and the present city of Boonville was built on the opposite bank.

The result was that after exploring more of Missouri and a portion of Illinois as hereafter described, I pulled up stakes in Missouri and stuck them down in Illinois on government lands, at a place called Springfield, within twenty miles of the then most northern settlements, where now rests the grand capitol of the great state of Illinois. This place had been selected as the temporary county seat, to accomodate the squatters until the survey and sale of land and until a permanent site could be selected. One reason for selecting this place was that there were more settlers in this vicinity than in any other part of northern Illinois, with whom the judge and lawyers could find quarters.

On my return to Boone's Lick, after making the necessary arrangements I started on my explorations. Leaving the Missouri timber behind me, I crossed the prairie, over which there was no road, and headed for the upper cabins on Salt river. Reaching the Salt river timber, I failed to find a house, and could not see the first mark of civilization. Here I camped for the night, using my saddle for a pillow. About daylight I heard a chicken crow and soon after a cow-bell tinkle, and following the direction of these welcome sounds I soon arrived at a cabin occupied by a Mr. Bess, where I had a good breakfast of milk, corn bread, butter, and hog meat, which to this day I never go back on.

Following down Salt river, I found but few houses until I got to the vicinity of Louisiana. Here I crossed the Mississippi into Illinois, and six miles out, at the



foot of the bluff, found a colony of twelve families living in tents. They were erecting cabins, however, and had named the place Atlas. It was situated in the Snye bottom.

I stayed in camp with them one week. The colony was headed by three families by the name of Ross—one a doctor, who did not work. We amused ourselves by trapping wolves. At night we would set the traps, and each morning would find from one to two wolves in them. From here I followed the Mississippi down to near the mouth of the Illinois, where I found another colony of about the same number. They had been there a year and had built comfortable cabins. I found one family at the mouth of the Illinois river. Here I swam my horse across by the side of a canoe, and continued my course east to the trail leading from St. Louis to the Sangamon country, thence north to the Diamond Grove (now the city of Jacksonville) in which resided three families, Abrams, Kline, and Wilson; thence east about ten miles and stopped with a Mr. Buchanan that night, and he pointed out to me the timber at Island Grove. I crossed the prairie without a trail, found no one in the grove, and kept on the west side until I struck a trail running east to where it was said a temporary county seat was located. Following this trail I found the place, on the east side of Spring creek timber. Charles R. Matheny had just moved to the place, and had erected a cabin of one room, in which he was residing with a large family of little children. He had been appointed clerk of the circuit and county court, judge of the probate, clerk of his own court, and county recorder, although there were no deeds yet to

be recorded. All these offices heaped upon him did not give him a bare support. John Kelley resided in the vicinity, and I stopped with him for the night.

I then explored the surrounding country, and found it sightly and such as could not be excelled in richness, and only equalled by the lands on the Missouri river. This settled the question, but, how to occupy my time until the lands should be put up for sale, was another problem. I had gained some little experience in selling goods, which determined me to use what money I had in merchandising until the land sales should take place.

I hunted around and found the stake that had been stuck for the beginning of a town named Springfield, and then bargained for the erection of a store house, to be set near the stake, eighteen feet square, with sheds on the sides for shelter. The house was to be of hewn logs, covered with boards, with heavy poles laid on to keep the boards from blowing off. The plank for the shelves and counter had to be sawed with a pit-saw. Two men would saw about 150 feet in a day.

I bought my goods in St. Louis, mostly at auction at very low prices, as many goods were then being forced to sale, but to complete the assortment had to buy some at private sale. I then chartered a boat from a Mr. January, on which to ship my goods up the Illinois river to the mouth of the Sangamon, one hundred and fifty miles above St. Louis and within fifty miles of Springfield. The boat was towed up the river by five men walking on shore and pulling a tow line about three hundred feet long. One man on the boat

acting as steersman, with myself as supercargo, completed the crew.

Just below the mouth of the Missouri river, where the current was very strong, a large cottonwood tree had fallen into the water, and the boat had to be steered out so as to clear it. As it struck the current, the bow was forced under the water. I calmly folded my arms with the thought that if it went down I would go too, as it held all that I had so far struggled for, together with four hundred dollars belonging to each of my brothers, William and Washington Iles, which my father had given me to invest for them; but, as the hatches were closed, only a few barrels of water got into the boat, and the bow soon raised and we pursued our upward course rejoicing—at least I did. The first house we came to above the mouth of the Missouri was the ferryman's, now the city of Alton. The next was at the mouth of the Illinois river. The next was a vacant cabin, with doors and windows cut out, but without shutters. This was at the mouth of the Sangamon river. The only other house on the Illinois at that day was an Indian-trading house at the foot of Lake Peoria, now the fine city of that name.

At the vacant cabin the boatmen landed my goods on the beach and started down the river on their return to St. Louis. I took my seat on the head of a whisky barrel, or salt barrel, I don't now know which, and watched the boat until it got out of sight, and I thought and thought. But as thinking would do no good, I went to the top of the bank and examined the cabin, and found a few household goods and farming utensils stowed in it. The articles had been brought there by

emigrants in what were called dug-outs. I believe the boat bringing my goods was the first boat that ever ascended the river, other than Indian-trading boats. The cabin was built by a Mr. Beard, and the place is now the city of Beardstown.

From the cabin I found a trail leading out towards Springfield, and I started on the trail afoot and alone. I had to wade a slough in the bottom knee-deep in water, and before I got to the first house on my road, fifteen miles out, occupied by Mr. Jobe, I met two teams going to the river; and as neither of them would have full loads, I turned back and made up their loads. As no one lived near, I had no fear of thieves. The whisky was in the most danger if found by the Indians, and was among the first articles hauled away. Besides, the wheat was about ready to cut, and at that day it was an uphill business and a drag to cut wheat without the aid of whisky. Upon my arrival at Springfield I employed teams to haul the goods. As there were about twenty-five tons of them, it took more than a month to do this, but it was finally accomplished without having the first thing disturbed or missing.

I now felt firmly rooted, and determined to seek no further, as I believed I was then in the center of the most extensive body of the richest land in the United States, or perhaps in the world; and don't yet think I was mistaken.

Upon my arrival I found my store house was not quite ready, for the want of nails, and you may believe it was a rough concern; but it answered my purpose. This was the first store house erected in Springfield or in the county, and I was the first one to sell goods in Springfield. For some time my sales were about as

much to Indians as to the whites. For the first two years I had no competition, and my customers were widely and thinly scattered over the territory now comprised in the counties of Sangamon, Morgan, Scott, Cass, Mason, Menard, Logan, Macon, Christian, Macoupin, Tazewell, McLean, DeWitt, and Champaign. The settlements in the last four were made after I opened my store. Many had to come more than eighty miles to trade. They were poor, and their purchases very light. There never was a more uniformly hospitable, honest, and industrious class of first settlers ever settled a new country.

The names of the settlers residing within the distance of two miles from the stake which had been set to mark a temporary county seat for Sangamon county, to be named Springfield, and who were instrumental in causing this site to be selected, were John Kelly, William Kelly, Andrew Elliot, Jacob Ellis, Levi Ellis, John Lindsay, Abram Lanterman, Mr. Dagget, and Samuel Little. These were the families with whom it was expected the judge and lawyers would find quarters until other accommodations could be provided. Some of the settlers who came later and settled over the larger district were of the more refined class, such as doctors, lawyers, school teachers, and preachers, and following in the train were some of the worse sort.

I first boarded with John Kelly, a North Carolinian and a widower. His household consisted of himself and two children, two younger brothers, George and Elisha, his aged father and mother, and myself. The board, to my notion, has never been excelled at any hotel I ever stopped at, either before or since. It

consisted in part of the best milk and butter ever set before a man, corn bread (baked on a hoe and called hoe-cake, instead of on a board or in the ashes as in Kentucky), honey, venison, turkey, prairie chicken, quail, squirrel, fish, and occasionally for variety we had pig, together with all the varieties of vegetables raised in this climate. Deer were very plenty. They trailed through the town, up the town branch, halting in a grove where now stands the governor's mansion; and if we wanted fresh venison for breakfast the Kelly boys would go to the grove early and kill a deer.

In 1821, after building my store house and as soon as the land was surveyed, I laid claim to the quarter on which my house was built, and told all who chose to settle in the place that if I got the land I would give each a lot. We traced out a street east and west, and by the time the sales took place we had a village of about 150 inhabitants, and children enough for a school. Our court house was of rough logs, daubed with black mud. A platform for the judge's seat, and the seats for the lawyers, jurors, and others, were of split logs, and the jurors had all out-doors in which to decide on their verdict.

Our school teacher was fond of his dram, and could make a good speech. One day, when the court had adjourned for dinner, some of his scholars drove into the court house a poor calf and twelve geese. The calf was tied on the platform, and the geese carefully driven into the corner usually occupied by the jury. They then got the teacher into the house, well primed, and in good condition to make a speech, and when the court returned from dinner they found the door closed, and

Mr. Mendal, the teacher, making an excited speech, addressing the calf as "the honorable judge" and the geese as "gentlemen of the jury." The judge let him off without inflicting any fine for contempt.

This rough log court house for many years answered the purpose for which it was built, as a place for holding court. As yet we had no jail, and no taxable lands from which to raise funds. County orders were worthless. We erected a whipping-post, as we had laws to punish theft or other lawless acts. If convicted, the culprit had to be whipped upon his bare back. Our sheriff, Gen. J. D. Henry, was tender-hearted and merciful, and laid the lash on lightly. Some, after being whipped, left the district; some made good citizens, and those who did not reform altogether were careful not to commit any act that might subject them to again hug the post and have their backs slashed. This mode of punishment seemed to have a better effect in checking crime than imprisonment in jail or in the penitentiary, and at much less cost.

*a perfect old importation*

Soon after opening my store, my father sent to me from Kentucky a youth, aged sixteen, a son of one of his valued neighbors, to act as store boy and clerk. This youth was John Williams, now better known as Col. Williams. He proved to be a valuable assistant, and lived with me as one of the family until 1831, when I sold my goods to him and established him in business. He was very successful, and soon improved and cultivated a large farm in connection with his store. In after years he established the first National Bank in Springfield, of which he was president and the principal stockholder. He also built and owned the Northwestern

Railroad, from Springfield to Havana, fifty miles. A short time since he sold his store, his bank stock, and his railroad, and has now partly retired from business, though he still cultivates his large farm and attends to the leasing and care of his valuable property in Springfield.

The land sales took place in 1823, and as I had, by close attention, industry, and economy, been successful, I was ready, and bought farm land, on which I built a cabin and hired a young man named Tom Smith to improve it. He soon afterwards married. As he was a man of good judgment, I allowed him to improve, cultivate, and raise stock much to his own notion. He lived on the place eight years, when I bought him a farm. He was a thrifty farmer, but died soon afterwards.

After selling my stock of goods to John Williams in 1831, I moved to my farm, and my time was occupied in farming, driving and selling hogs and cattle in St. Louis, and mules in Kentucky, and in buying and selling land and town lots, until 1839. During that year I lost quite a large amount of money (for me) in packing and shipping pork to New Orleans, which cured me of any more pork packing.

After moving to my farm, I soon found myself much in need of an additional plowman. A boy came to me and said he wanted to work. He had the chills every other day, and could only plow on his well days and do some light work on his chill days. His name was Robert North. He was about the most scrawny looking chap I ever saw, and could neither read nor write. But as I was much in need of a plow boy I took



him on trial, uncouth and sickly as he was. He was so slow in his movements that he kept me on nettles. But his first day's plowing convinced me he would do. He had plowed as much and had done as good work as any of the other hands. He soon got well of the chills, and made me a most valuable hand. I taught him to read and write. He lived with me ten years, got married and went to farming on his own hook, in which he was successful. He died two years ago, at the age of seventy, after accumulating in land and cash more than \$150,000.

After North married and left me, I hired a young man by the name of Charles Fairchild, about twenty-one years old. He was all go-ahead, a brisk worker, and was my leader. The only fault I found in him was that he would tire out too quick and would breakdown my other hands. He resided with me several years; is still living and a thrifty farmer.

These were faithful men, who worked for and looked after my interest as though it had been their own; and when it was necessary for anything to be done, day or night, rain or shine, nothing would stop them. I think I did a good part by them, and was proud to see them successful.

Philo Beers and Miss Stillman were the first couple married in Sangamon county.

In 1824 the United States sold the land on which the temporary county seat was located. I bought one quarter; P. P. Enos, Thomas Cox, and John Taylor each bought a quarter. There was not much speculation at that day; we bid off the land at \$1.25 per acre.

In March, 1825, commissioners were appointed to select and fix permanently a site for the county seat of Sangamon county. After coming to Springfield they explored much of the surrounding country, for the purpose of viewing and making the selection. On their return to Springfield, one place had been entered by speculators on which to induce the commissioners to fix the site. It was four miles from town. The ground had thawed out and was soft and miry. The commissioners, worn and tired, went to look at the place. To go to it from town several sloughs and some marshy ground had to be crossed. Andrew Elliott, one of our citizens, who had been much over the ground hunting, agreed to pilot them. He told them that as the ravines were full and the marshy ground covered with water, they would find it a tedious trip, but he would do the best he could. He had his cue. They found the route almost impassable; but after they got to the place, which was on the river, they found it slightly, though difficult to get to, and asked him to try to find a better way to return. They found the route back not much better, having to cross water that nearly swam the horses. They had now viewed all the places spoken of as good sites for a town, and returned to Springfield to make up their minds.

The next day my wife gave them a good dinner. I said to them that if on consideration they selected Springfield as the permanent site, P. P. Enos and myself would give the county forty acres of land, and as they had had a tedious time and little pay, I would cash their warrants for them, although they were almost worthless, there being no money in the treasury. The result was, that Springfield was selected as the perma-

nent county seat, and some thought that the good dinner my wife provided for the commissioners played its part.

My wife, whose maiden name was Malinda Benjamin, was a native of Lima, New York. She came to Missouri in 1818 with a young married couple by the name of Shaw, accompanied by her uncle and some emigrants who built a flat-boat above Pittsburg and floated down the Ohio river. They stopped at the lead mines below St. Louis. Her uncle returned to New York to move out his own and her mother's family; but instead of moving out, married her mother and remained in New York. She was a thousand miles from her mother; and the difficulty of getting her back was such at that day, that she was left to hoe her own row. She was employed as a teacher, young as she was. She taught school at Cape Girardeau and at the lead mines below St. Louis. Her scholars were mostly French, who knew but little of the English language. Mr. Shaw, after stopping some time in Missouri, moved to Illinois and settled on the St. Louis road, fifty miles south of Springfield. My wife remained in Missouri teaching school, but after a time came over to Illinois to visit the family of Mr. Shaw. It was at his house I first saw her, on one of my trips to St. Louis. We had to travel at night and lay by in the day time, on account of the green-head flies, which were a torment to men and animals. When I stopped in the morning for the day, as I was going to the stable to see to the care of my horse, I passed by where my wife was at the wash tub. I spoke to her and she turned her face to me. Her color was heightened by exercise, her cheeks rosy, and her eyes bright, and I said to myself,

you are pretty, and you have such bright eyes you must be smart. I lay by that day, and noticed she was sprightly and cheerful, and thought she would make some man a good wife; but did not think of her for myself, as I was not ready to change the bachelor for the married life.

Mr. Shaw soon moved to Springfield, and my wife came with the family, and there she soon got acquainted with the family of Judge Phelps, who had moved from New York to the vicinity of Springfield. He said he knew her relatives in New York, and that they were of good stock. His family liked my wife much and had her visit them often. When she was making one of these visits I took her out in a buggy, and on the way told her I had decided to change my bachelor life for a married one, and that, as we had been acquainted with each other more than two years—long enough to form an opinion of each other—I could say for my part that I had never known any one I would choose for a wife in preference to her. Now it was for her to say whether she was willing to accept me for a husband. Her answer was that she had formed the same opinion of me, and that there was no one she had ever known whom she would choose for a husband in preference. So the bargain was sealed, and we agreed to get married as soon as arrangements could be made for house-keeping, so that we could have the comforts of our own home at the beginning.

To enable her to do her part, I furnished her bed-ticking, feathers, and sheeting, to be made up for a bed which was to be placed in a room over my little store. She was a brisk worker, and soon had them ready. For

my part, I built a shed and brick chimney, with open fire-place (this was before the days of cook stoves), attached to the rear of the store, for a cooking and dining place, until I had time to build a better. I soon had cooking utensils and table ware, and was prepared. After supper we called in a preacher, who married us, and our bridal trip was across the street to our bedroom. The next morning my wife got my breakfast, which I relished. Our shed soon gave place to a more comfortable cook and bed-room, and we now felt firmly rooted in our own domicile. We were married in 1824, and soon after sent for my wife's sister, Clarissa, who was sent to us in the care of a Mr. Dryer, who moved in a wagon more than a thousand miles with his wife and three small children, and camped out every night. This sister was then twelve years old, and lived with us until she married Peter Van Bergen. We then sent for her half-sister, Lydia Porter, who lived with us and Mrs. Van Bergen until she married John Williams, my old clerk, who was then established in business.

We had two children—the oldest a daughter, named Louisa, who was born in 1825 and died in 1857; the other a son, Thomas, born in 1830 and died in 1877. My wife died in 1866. She was my superior in intellect, and I never realized her worth until she was gone, gone, gone from me forever.

The house I built in 1823 for a store house, and in which I commenced my married life in 1824, is the oldest house in Springfield. It is situated on the northwest corner of the block next west of the Chicago & Alton depot; it was built of hewed logs, weather-boarded, and has still a respectable appearance.

In 1836, the state legislature passed an act removing the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield. A. Lincoln, a young member, was given much credit for his exertions in securing the passage of the act. This was before he had studied law. The first legislature that met in Springfield was held in 1838, and made use of the churches in which to hold their sessions; these were far less commodious than the grand state house of the great state of Illinois which now adorns the city of Springfield.

In the early days of Illinois it was hard to find good material for law makers. I was elected a state senator in 1826, and again for a second term. The senate then comprised thirteen members and the house twenty-five. Our large county, more than two hundred miles long, extended north to the territorial lines of Wisconsin and Michigan, including Chicago, which was then called Fort Dearborn and was occupied solely by United States troops.

During my last term as senator, the population had increased so fast that the legislature passed an act for the election of two senators and seven representatives in this county. All of those elected were tall men, and had good minds and considerable information, which made them good and valuable members. They were dubbed the "long nine." Lincoln, afterwards president, was among the number. At that day we had but three judges (Lockwood, Wilson, and Brown), who performed both circuit and supreme court duties. And now, all the judges, all the legislators, and all the men of prominence, or who had a prospect of prominence, prior to the year 1830, are dead, with the exception of

Ninian W. Edwards and John T. Stuart, of Springfield, and Wm. Thomas, of Jacksonville.

In looking back over the past sixty years, and recalling the condition of the state at that date, when the entire population was but little more than 100,000, and contrasting it with the Illinois of to-day, we are astounded at the wonderful progress made. When we see resting upon the margin of its fertile prairies, and overlooking the great lake whose bosom is whitened with the sails of its commerce, a city like Chicago, with a population of more than half a million, besides numerous other cities scattered over the state of from ten to forty thousand, and reflect upon the vast growth of the farming interest, we can but marvel.

*Money is all power. let it be  
obtained as it will*

## CHAPTER IV.

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*Indian Wars—The Black Hawk War—Stillman's Defeat—On the Scout—An Indian Ruse—Opening Communication with Galena—Meeting with Col. Taylor—Preparations for an Attack—An Exciting Chase—Home Again—The Result of the War.*

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In 1827 I was elected major in the command of Col. T. McNeal, which was intended to take part in the war against the Winnebagoes. We had no fighting, and the hostilities were stopped by the treaty of Prairie du Chien.

In the Indian war of 1832, known as the Black Hawk war, I enlisted as a private in Capt. Dawson's company. We marched to Rock Island, where a Mr. Davenport was located as an Indian-trader. We then marched up Rock river to the crossing of the road from Springfield to Galena. Here John Dixon resided, to accommodate the travel to Galena. His family had then been sent to Galena for safety. About fifteen miles above Dixon's, on Rock river, was a large Indian village. Gen. Stillman, with his command, advanced to within three miles of the village, when he was attacked, whipped, and routed, having seventeen of his men killed. The next day Gen. Atkinson, with his army, marched to the battle field, buried the dead, and returned to camp.



After the dead were buried, and before returning to camp, we took our lunch. The army was scant of provisions, and my mess had for rations only a small piece of fat bacon and some parched corn. I was selected to cut the bacon into eight equal parts—the number in my mess. The boys watched me closely. We took our seats on the grass by the side of a pool of water thick with wrigglers, and ate our lunch. The boiling of the water for coffee fixed the wrigglers. We were more particular with what we drank, straining that through our pocket handkerchiefs. We got back to camp after dark, very tired, and lay down on sloping ground with our saddles for pillows. I slept soundly until a heavy rain fell which almost covered me in water before I awoke. My mess are now all dead but Major John T. Stuart, to whom I have before referred.

The object now was to find out the route the Indians had gone to make their escape. William S. Hamilton (a son of Alexander Hamilton, of Burr memory) and myself, with three other men, undertook the task. On our route we passed around the village at a distance of eight or ten miles. We found a large trail going in the direction of the Illinois river. The second night we were out we were alarmed by Indians. We had noticed in the afternoon Indian pony tracks crossing our way in the timber; the leaves turned up by their feet were still moist. When we camped for the night we left two men half a mile back to guard our trail. They soon came up almost breathless, and reported Indians on our trail. We mounted and struck out single file until we got some distance in the prairie, then halted, and the report was that while they were watching from the roots of a large tree they saw the

bushes move and then three objects advancing. The moon shone dimly, but they saw the objects plainly.

We continued our course until we struck Rock river above the village, and camped for the night. In the morning we followed down Rock river to the Indian village, which we found deserted, and there we halted for rest and lunch. We found the Indians had left their canoes and much other Indian property. After lunch and rest, we set out on our return to the army, and just as we ascended to the top of a ridge we met the troops on the other side, and such a shout was never heard. They thought we had been killed, for just after we had left on this trip news came that the Indians were murdering the people on the Illinois river and had taken two girls prisoners. Their going in the direction of the Illinois river, to our rear, on leaving their village, was found to be a ruse; for after going some distance the most of them, with their women and children, diverged in a northerly direction, so as to escape by crossing the Mississippi above Galena, while a few were sent to commit the murders on the Illinois river to divert our army in that direction while the others made good their escape.

The army was now on its march to the Illinois river, and had diverged so as to come by or near the deserted village to try to learn our fate, thinking we were no doubt killed. When the army reached the Illinois river, where Ottawa is now situated, the term for which the volunteers had enlisted expired, and they were disbanded. A few companies from the disbanded troops again enlisted for twenty days, to remain and protect the settlers until new troops could assemble. I

was elected captain of one of these companies, although there was hardly a man in it but what was better suited to be a commander. It was made up of generals, colonels, captains, and distinguished men from the disbanded army. I was proud of it.

My company was mustered in by young Lieut. Anderson, a graduate of West Point, acting as adjutant (of Fort Sumter fame). While the other companies were ordered to scout the country, mine was held by Gen. Atkinson in camp as a reserve. One company was ordered to go to Rock river (now Dixon) and report to Col. Taylor, afterwards president, who had been left there with a few U. S. soldiers to guard the army supplies. The place was also made a point of rendezvous. Just as the company got to Dixon, a man came in and reported that he and six others were on the road to Galena, and in passing through a point of timber about twenty miles north of Dixon they were fired on and the six killed, he being the only one to make his escape. One of the number killed was Col. Savre, Indian agent. Col. Taylor ordered the company to proceed to the place, bury the dead, go on to Galena, and get all the information they could about the Indians. But the company took fright and came back to the Illinois river, helter-skelter.

Gen. Atkinson then called on me and wanted to know how I felt about taking the trip; that he was exceedingly anxious to open communication with Galena, and to find out, if possible, the whereabouts of the Indians before the new troops arrived. I answered the general that myself and men were getting rusty and were anxious to have something to do, and that nothing

would please us better than to be ordered out on an expedition; that I would find out how many of my men had good horses and were otherwise well equipped, and what time we wanted to prepare for the trip. I called on him again at sunset and reported that I had about fifty men well equipped and eager, and that we wanted one day to make preparations. He said go ahead and he would prepare our orders.

The next day was a busy day, running bullets and getting our flint locks in order—we had no percussion locks then. Gen. Henry, one of my privates, who had been promoted to the position of major of the companies, volunteered to go with us. I considered him a host, as he had served as lieutenant in the war of 1812, under Gen. Scott, was in the battle of Lundy's Lane and in several other battles. He was a good drill officer, and could aid me much. Mr. Lincoln, our late president, was a private in my company. After Gen. Atkinson handed me my orders, and my men were mounted and ready for the trip, I felt proud of them, and was confident of our success, although numbering only forty-eight. Several good men failed to go, as they had gone down to the foot of the Illinois rapids to aid in bringing up the boats of army supplies. We wanted to be as little encumbered as possible, and took nothing that could be dispensed with, other than blankets, tin cups, coffee pots, canteens, a wallet of bread, and some fat side meat, which we ate raw or broiled.

When we arrived at Rock river we found Col. Taylor on the opposite side, in a little fort built of prairie sod. He sent an officer in a canoe to bring me over. I said to the officer that I would come over as soon as

I got my men in camp. I knew of a good spring half a mile above, and I determined to camp at it. After the men were in camp I called on Gen. Henry, and he accompanied me. On meeting Col. Taylor (he looked like a man born to command) he seemed a little piqued that I did not come over and camp with him. I told him we felt just as safe as if quartered in his one-horse fort; and besides, I knew what his orders would be, and wanted to try the mettle of my men before starting on the perilous trip I knew he would order. He said the trip was perilous, and that since the murder of the six men all communication with Galena had been cut off, and it might be besieged; that he wanted me to proceed to Galena, and that he would have my orders for me in the morning, and asked what outfit I wanted. I answered nothing but coffee, side meat, and bread.

In the morning my orders were to collect and bury the remains of the six men murdered, proceed to Galena, make a careful search for the signs of Indians, and find out whether they were aiming to escape by crossing the river below Galena, and get all information at Galena of their probable whereabouts before the new troops were ready to follow them.

John Dixon, who kept a house of entertainment here and had sent his family to Galena for safety, joined us and hauled our wallets of corn and grub in his wagon, which was a great help. Lieut. Harris, U. S. army, also joined us. I now had fifty men to go with me on the march. I detailed two to march on the right, two on the left, and two in advance, to act as look-outs to prevent a surprise. They were to keep in full view of us and to remain out until we camped for the night.

Just at sundown the first day, while we were at lunch, our advance scouts came in under whip and reported Indians. We bounced to our feet, and having a full view of the road for a long distance, could see a large body coming toward us. All eyes were turned to John Dixon, who, as the last one dropped out of sight coming over a ridge, pronounced them Indians. I stationed my men in a ravine crossing the road, where any one approaching could not see us until within thirty yards; the horses I had driven back out of sight in a valley. I asked Gen. Henry to take command; he said no, stand at your post, and walked along the line talking to the men in a low, calm voice. Lieut. Harris, U. S. A., seemed much agitated; he ran up and down the line and exclaimed, "Captain, we will catch hell." He had horse pistols, belt pistols, and double-barrelled gun. He would pick the flints, reprime, and laid the horse pistols at his feet. When he got all ready he passed along the line slowly, and seeing the nerves of the men all quiet—after Gen. Henry's talk to them—said, "Captain, we are safe, we can whip five hundred Indians." Instead of Indians they proved to be the command of Gen. Dodge, from Galena, of one hundred and fifty men, *en route* to find out what had become of Gen. Atkinson's army, as since the murder of the six men communication had been stopped for more than ten days. My look-out at the top of the hill did not notify us, and we were not undeceived until they got within thirty steps of us. My men then raised a yell and ran to finish their lunch.

Next morning, in passing into a grove of timber, my front scouts again came under whip and reported Indians. I asked where. They pointed to my two

scouts on the right, trying to catch an Indian pony; one had on a red shirt, and they mistook them for Indians. These two men had been in Stillman's defeat, and as their horses were weak and it was easier to march out of line, I had detailed them to go in the road in front. I now ordered them to the rear and to drop behind as far as they chose, and detailed two other men, on whom I could rely, to take the advance.

When we got within fifteen miles of Galena, on Apple river, we found a stockade filled with women and children and a few men, all terribly frightened. The Indians had shot at and chased two men that afternoon, who made their escape to the stockade. They insisted on our quartering in the fort, but instead we camped one hundred yards outside, and slept, what little sleep we did get, with our guns in our arms. Gen. Henry did not sleep, but drilled my men all night so the moment they were called they would bounce to their feet and stand in two lines, the front ready to fire and fall back to reload while the others stepped forward and took their places. They were called up a number of times, and we got but little sleep.

We arrived at Galena the next day, and found the citizens prepared to defend the place. They were glad to see us, as it had been so long since they had heard from the army. The few Indians prowling about Galena and murdering were simply there as a ruse.

On our return from Galena, near the forks of the Apple river and Gratiot roads, we could see Gen. Dodge on the Gratiot road on his return from Rock river. His six scouts had discovered my two men that I had allowed to drop in the rear. Having weak horses they

had fallen in the rear about two miles, and each took the other to be Indians, and such an exciting race I never saw until they got sight of my company; then they came to a sudden halt, and after looking at us a few moments wheeled their horses and gave up the chase. My two men did not know but that they were Indians until they came up with us and shouted "Indians!" They had thrown away their wallets and guns and used their ramrods as whips.

The few houses on the road that usually accommodated the travel, were all standing but vacant as we went. On our return we found them all burned by the Indians. On my return to the Illinois river I reported to Gen. Atkinson, saying that from all we could learn the Indians were aiming to escape by going north with the intention of crossing the Mississippi river above Galena. The new troops had just arrived and were being mustered into service. My company had only been organized for twenty days, and as the time had now expired were mustered out. All but myself again volunteered, for the third time. They elected Dr. Early captain, and presented themselves to Gen. Atkinson, who had them mustered in, but attached them to no corps. He used them as scouts and look-outs, and at night located them in the center of the camp. I had had enough of camp life, roaming about after Indians, to satisfy me, and returned to Springfield, where I found one little woman and two little chaps mighty glad to see and welcome me, and where I could enjoy much more comfort with less danger of having my scalp lifted.

The new troops soon got on the trail of the Indians, and by forced marches overtook them on the



bank of the Mississippi below Prairie du Chien, preparing to cross. In the battle that ensued a number were killed and taken prisoners, we losing but few men. Black Hawk made his escape, but was afterwards captured by friendly Indians.

This was called the Black Hawk war of 1832, which closed up all further trouble with Indians in Illinois, and opened up the country, from a little above Lake Peoria, which was then without a single white inhabitant other than those isolated at Galena working the lead mines, a few Indian traders, and the troops at Fort Dearborn. The latter place was soon afterwards laid out in lots for the beginning of a town called Chicago. At that time there were no settlers either in Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Minnesota, or anywhere in the northwest, now so well settled with thrifty farmers and containing numerous large towns and cities.

Of all the men in my company in the Black Hawk war, I know of no one now living but John T. Stuart. Major Stuart was elected to congress over Stephen A. Douglas, and was the first and last one who ever beat Douglas in his race for office. Mr. Lincoln was assassinated in Washington, while president; Dr. Early was killed in Springfield; Gen. Henry died in New Orleans; Gen. Anderson, of Fort Sumter memory, who mustered my company in, and out, is dead, and his widow now resides at Green Cove Springs, Florida.

## CHAPTER V.

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1840 to 1883—*Visits to Florida—Seeking Winter Quarters—The South at the Close of the War—Indian River—How I enjoy Myself in Florida—Backwoods Life Again—Visit to the Lighthouse—A Hermit.*

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In 1840 I quit dealing in hogs and cattle, and occupied my time in farming, buying and selling lands and town lots, up to the year 1866, when my wife died. I then felt mentally and physically broken down, and knew I was not capable of doing much business. At the time of my wife's death we were living in Springfield, south of the Leland hotel. We had a good woman and child, and I thought I would continue house-keeping. But I soon got restless, and did not know what to do with myself or for myself; so I sold the house and moved to one I had built on my farm two miles east of town. This farm, comprising more than one thousand acres, I put in pasture, and cultivated nothing but grass and a garden. I knew I was not fitted for buying cattle to graze the pastures, and I engaged Harvey Edwards to buy cattle for me in the spring to eat the grass, and in the fall would sell the fat ones to shippers and the others to feeders. I only had to attend to the care and salting in the summer, and in the winter had nothing to do. I placed the leasing and selling of

my town lots in Springfield in the hands of my nephews, N. M. Broadwell and Obed Lewis, and would not risk either the leasing or selling by myself. Every year since I have been going to Florida to spend my winters. I have a room fitted up for myself at my farm, and make it my home a portion of the summer. I also repurchased the house I had sold in town, which now belongs to Mrs. Obed Lewis, my niece, and in this I also have a room fitted up for me, and make that my home part of the summer.

In 1874 I leased my farm to J. W. Dalby, reserving my furnished room, which is at all times ready for me to occupy when I choose to stay at the farm. This gives me leisure in summer, and relieves me of all care.

When I make my visits to Florida, it is not for the purpose of sight-seeing, nor for the flowers or the perfume of flowers, nor for the fruits of the south, for these we can get in Illinois from all climates at all seasons; neither is it for the purpose of spinning out my life; but solely for the purpose of finding a place where I can be comfortable in winter. And I think I have found at Jupiter inlet, on Indian river, and at Lake Worth, twelve miles below, the most enjoyable winter climate in the world, where there are no frosts, where one can breathe the balmy salt atmosphere, be out in the open air at all hours, day and night, and have the doors and windows open.

The first winter I visited Florida was just after the close of the rebellion. I followed the route of Sherman's march from Nashville to Chattanooga, Atlanta, Macon, and Savannah, and found the country in a horrible condition. The fences were all burned, fields

lying waste, many houses burned, with nothing but bare chimneys standing—earthworks and battle-fields yet plainly visible. The towns on the route, as well as the country, were in a bad fix. The people had little money—their hogs, cattle and sheep all killed—and it seemed hard to subsist without suffering. I saw ladies who had been in affluent circumstances come into the towns driving a poor cow in a cart, bringing vegetables to market to exchange for necessary wants. I stopped some time in Atlanta, where the convention was in session. The members were mostly carpet-baggers, with more than thirty freedmen just from the plow. I visited the convention several times while in session, and always found the lobby and gallery filled with blacks; the white population seemed crestfallen and held themselves aloof. In returning home I came by way of Richmond, Va., where a convention was also in session, and it was very like that at Atlanta. The state legislatures of Georgia for several years after, were composed of the same class of irresponsibles, and the legislation was most reckless. But now, in 1883, you cannot see the first vestige of the war. It is astonishing how quickly the country got into a flourishing condition, after they got rid of the carpet-baggers and had better legislation.

After leaving Atlanta, my next halting place was Savannah. I liked the town and climate, but I only stopped there a few days, and then went to Jacksonville, Florida, and stopped at the Taylor house, the only hotel in Jacksonville. It was a long, low, two-story house; the partitions and doors mostly of cotton cloth nailed on strips. I found the house filled with invalids who had various complaints contracted in the war, and were

broken-down. These, with a few well ones who came to take care of the sick, were about the only visitors at that day. The moans and groans of the sick distressed me; I could hear them at all hours, day and night. So this was not the place I was hunting for.

My aim was to find a climate and place where I could be comfortable in winter, and in the wildest section I could find—where the people mostly lived in one room cabins, much like the ones in the wilds of Kentucky where I was born and raised, and where they subsisted mostly on wild meats. So, taking a steamboat, I pursued my journey to what was, at that day, the head of navigation on the St. Johns river, and stopped at Melonville, where I found a store kept by Doyle & Brantley. No other house was near. They lived a mile and a half back, and had a negro to lodge in the little store house at night. I walked to the nearest house, one mile back, and got board with Mr. Ginn, at the Spear orange grove, where I stopped for the winter and enjoyed the balmy breeze. The Spear grove and the Hughey and Dr. Caldwell groves were then the only bearing ones in that district; now, in 1883, the country back is filled with groves in full bearing, and the town of Sanford, on the river, is growing rapidly, while Melonville has been abandoned.

In all my visits to Florida, I usually hunt the wildest and most thinly settled sections I can find. In 1878, when I made my first visit to Indian river, all who knew anything about the river tried to persuade me not to go, as they thought I would find too much roughing in the trip. Arriving at Titusville, at the head of the river, I found a good settlement and the best oranges in

the state, but from a little below Titusville to the mouth of the river, 150 miles, I found but few settlers. Judge Paine, at St. Lucie, opposite the Indian river inlet, was the only one prepared to take a few boarders. This river is more than two miles wide, and runs parallel with the ocean. It is salt water, and is fed by inlets from the sea. It is very shallow, and the oyster reefs make it difficult to navigate, even by small sail boats. I go down in mail boats, usually with no other company than the mail carrier, who makes two trips a week the first one hundred miles. I make these rough-and-tumble trips down the Indian river much more enjoyable to myself than most visitors do. I stop off at most of the cabins on the river—some of them only one-room houses—and stay until the next trip of the mail boat, when I move lower down the river, but only travel when wind and weather are favorable. I am one of the favored ones. All make me comfortable, no matter what the appearances may be. I often stop at cabins where I seldom see the face of any other persons during my stay than those of the household. This I enjoy, while others would be miserable for want of excitement and company.

The first winter I went down the Indian river I stopped at James Paine's, opposite the Indian river inlet. The second winter, the mail was sent down once a week to Jupiter and Lake Worth. I went down with the mail carrier, but when we got to the lighthouse at the foot of Indian river, the carrier had to pack the mail on his back, twelve miles, to Lake Worth post-office. As I could not walk that distance, he left me and his boat at the lighthouse. The keeper told me the government did not allow him to take boarders, but

I was welcome to stay until the mail carrier came back. By the time he returned I had become pretty well acquainted with the family, and they were willing for me to stay as a visitor; so I stopped the winter with them. In the spring, when I was about to leave; the lighthouse keeper and his wife invited me when I came back to come and stop with them as a visitor, but to bring no one with me. The family consisted of himself, his wife, two little daughters, and two sons younger. The little girls were good oarsmen, and would have me out on the water in their little boat, riding or fishing, more than half of my time. This gave me exercise without fatiguing me much. I am now at this date, 1883, in the eighty-eighth year of my age, and can take but little exercise without getting very tired.

But few visitors come down this river; when they do, they come in sail boats, and camp out or lodge on the boats. A few sportsmen come down hunting and fishing, and camp at the inlet, half a mile from the lighthouse. My little girls often take me down in their little row boat, and while I pay a visit to the sportsmen or visitors in camp, they take a romp on the beach and gather shells. From my window I can see large ships going south, one mile off. They never stop, there being no harbor; those going north are kept out by the gulf-stream, and are never seen. I have visited my nearest neighbors at Lake Worth, twelve miles distant. It is an isolated place, and to get there you have to go out in the ocean twelve miles, and must have very favorable wind and weather. This lake and Jupiter are the most charming places for me that I have yet found. The lake is twenty miles long and one mile wide.

The products of the lower part of Indian river and Lake Worth are cocoanuts, pineapples, bananas, tomatoes, and all other fruits common to that latitude, which grow luxuriantly. No orange groves are yet started. The people all have sail boats, and it costs them nothing but their own labor to get their products to the head of the river. It is then hauled over from Rock Ledge, three miles, or from Titusville, seven miles, to St. Johns river, and shipped north from Jacksonville. Since I first went down the river it has settled rapidly. Some from the north and west are erecting dwellings for winter homes.

When I am at my winter home at Jupiter inlet, with the family of the lighthouse keeper, the children are my constant companions. I want no other. I am good company for myself, and never get lonesome.

On one of my trips down Indian river in a sail boat, we were stopped by a fog, and had to stay in the boat all night. It was ten next morning before the fog raised, and twelve miles to the first cabin. I was crazy for a cup of coffee. The mail carrier said a Mr. Estes, a hermit, lived off the river, a half mile up a cove opposite to us, and thought that by going there we would get a lunch. On getting to the place I found a feeble old man, in a comfortable straw shanty lined with hides of the sea cow and skins of the panther, bear, and other wild animals. I told him I was hungry and had stopped to get a cup of coffee, and anything else he chose to let us have for breakfast. He said he had been sick several months, and was not yet able to wait on himself, and that he had been cared for by the life-station keeper, as old a man as himself, who lived alone



at the life-station on the sea side of the island, half a mile off. There were no other cabins nearer than twelve miles. These life stations are kept supplied with provisions to be used in cases of vessels being wrecked. He said by our help he could give us breakfast. We asked what help he wanted, and he said to make a fire, bring a bucket of water, put on the tea-kettle, and bring the meal and tray to where he was sitting, so that he could mix the meal for corn cakes. He then described what he could give us for breakfast, which was coffee, corn cakes, and fat bacon. He said that he had got too old to hunt deer, but when he wanted fresh meat he had fish and 'possum. When he mentioned 'possum he made my mouth water. He told how he caught 'possums. Setting a barrel by the side of his door, he would put a fish in it and lean a stick of wood against the barrel. The 'possum would climb up and jump in, but was too clumsy to get out. While breakfast was being prepared I took a stroll about the premises. He had a few oranges, bananas, a garden, and other fruits. Near by were two ridges of oyster shells three feet high and more than a hundred feet long; they looked like they had been placed there centuries ago. I liked his place and his simple manner of living, and thought I would like to live alone just as he did. I proposed to buy him out, but he would not sell. He would take no pay for our breakfast. This was about the only cabin I ever stopped at where I could spend no money. Perhaps it was because there were no children there.

## CHAPTER VI.

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*Reminiscences and Anecdotes—First Settlers—Cut Silver Money—The  
Girls and Boys—Grass-hoppers—A Cyclone—  
The Contrast—Conclusion.*

*And left his office at Springfield 1823*  
( In the spring of 1822, my father visited me at Springfield, and on his return to Kentucky I accompanied him six miles. Here we met a family consisting of a man named Anderson, his wife, and three children. He was coming to hunt a tract of land the government had given him for services in the war of 1812. He said he had come all the way from New York on foot, camping out at night, and only rode short distances when they met empty wagons. His wife carried the babe and a bundle, and he the plunder. When they got to Illinois they had to wade an overflowed bottom, and when the water was over the depth of the little boys they would keep their heads above water by holding to the tail of his coat until they got out. I told him he would find his land on the other side of the Illinois river, and no person living within forty miles of it, and that he would have to stop with us until a settlement began in the vicinity; that we could locate him where we located all new comers, in our mud-daubed court house, until the settlers helped build him a house. Years after, he moved to his land, made a fine farm, and raised a respectable family.

Many of the first comers from Kentucky and Tennessee moved with one-horse wagons to haul the plunder, the families walking and camping out. Many came without a dollar, but by raising corn and selling it to those who came later were enabled to buy land at the first land sales. Most of the deserving got rich.

Our nearest mill for grinding corn was at Belleville or St. Louis, one hundred miles, and the nearest post-office Edwardsville, eighty miles.

The first settlers practiced every economy. The women spun, wove, and manufactured most of the wearing apparel; the men made their caps for winter wear out of coon and other skins, leaving the tails for ornament.

In the early days of Kentucky what little money we had was silver. We had no banks. Change was scarce, but we had an easy way of making it. If a man had a dollar and wanted to pay fifty cents, he would cut the dollar into two pieces; in like manner, the halves and quarters would be cut. We used leather purses to keep the sharp points of the silver from cutting our pockets.

In 1817 the legislature chartered a batch of banks, and cut money went out of circulation. When I emigrated to Missouri in 1818 I had more than one hundred dollars in this mutilated silver, which I changed into bank notes, and soon paid them out in Missouri for land. It was well I did, for the banks soon bursted.

In the early days of Springfield, sixty years ago, my wife's sister Clarissa, John Williams, and Philip Latham were going to school together. She was the youngest of the few girls in town. She told Phil. to

say to the young men that when they saw a candle at her window they might know the girls had congregated in her room, and they would find a welcome and have a jolly time. Latham, on seeing the signal, would attract attention by calling out, "Boys, the candle is lit!"

In the fall of 1820 I explored the entire western part of Missouri bordering on the Indian Territory, more than a hundred miles beyond the settled part. A few men had been up in the spring and had raised small patches of corn and garden stuff without fencing, and had just moved up. Here I saw the first grasshoppers I had ever seen. The air was filled with them, as high as the eye could see; the ground was soon covered, and by next day all vegetation was eaten up. Although they have frequently made their appearance since, I believe they have never come below the border counties in Missouri.

On the 18th day of May, 1883, the day I reached my home in Springfield from my sojourn in Florida, a terrific cyclone started two miles south of Springfield. Its track was northeast, sweeping from their foundations several farm houses, leaving scarcely a vestige; two men were killed and several persons badly crippled. It struck my farm two miles east of town, and passed through a forest of lofty young timber, mostly white oak, which I had been nursing for more than fifty years. When I entered this land it was open woods of lofty white oak, from which the rails were cut to fence my farm. The fires being kept out, it grew up into a dense forest of white oak and other timber, the bodies being from 40 to 50 feet high; it had trimmed itself, and was a sight to look at. I was fond of it. After the cyclone

passed, there was not a large tree left standing; they were torn up by the roots, or twisted as a withe; it made me sick to look at it. More than 4000 cords of wood were destroyed. It struck the corner of my brick house, blew down one chimney on the house and one on the kitchen, blew down my smoke house, wood house, and work shop; it blew down more than four miles of my fencing, and one-half the rails could not be found.

Now, to draw the contrast. From the date of my birth, in 1796, to the present year, 1883, one can but wonder at the progress made in everything. Then, there were but thirteen states; now, thirty-eight. Then, there were but few places west of Virginia called towns, except Lexington, Ky. The district where I was born and raised was heavy timber, and all the implements we had to work with were of the rudest kind. Our chopping axes were made by our blacksmiths, and were very rough. It took two men the most of a day to grind an axe to an edge, one to turn the grindstone, the other to hold the axe; they made slow headway. In clearing ground for corn, the timber was felled and cut into convenient lengths to roll and carry to heaps for burning. The neighbors would collect at each other's cabins to help roll and carry the logs. This was called log-rolling. Everything was done by main strength. The heavy lifting made men stoop-shouldered and old at forty and fifty. Our hay-forks were made out of forked sticks; the hay was raked into rows with hand rakes. Our wheat, what little we raised, was cut and bound by hand, and threshed out with a flail or tramped out by horses. It was separated from the chaff by pouring it down from an elevation allowing the

wind to blow the chaff away, or by two men with a sheet winnowing it. This had to be done a number of times before it was clean enough for the mill. In the spring we prepared our corn ground for the plow by cutting the stalks with a hoe, picking each stalk up by hand and piling them into heaps to be burned. There seemed to be no ingenuity to lessen or lighten labor, hardly to so much as use lever power to aid in heavy lifting. This state of affairs continued until about the year 1830, when inventive minds began to make machines to do much of the work for us, by which it is now done more perfectly than we can possibly do it by hand. We can now take one of these machines into a harvest field, and it will cut, bind, thresh, and clean the wheat for the mill in a flash, acting like a thing of life. They can even talk for us, or transmit our voices to a long distance. We can all see what a revolution invention has brought about in so short a time; and it seems as though it would be no great wonder, in view of what it has done and is doing, if something was invented that would do to some extent our thinking.

#### IN CONCLUSION.

I have just returned to my home in Springfield, Ill. The most of the foregoing was written the past and present winter of 1882 and 1883, while sojourning at my winter home in Florida, on Indian river, with Mr. Armour, at Jupiter inlet, and the lighthouse. I have decided to print what I have written in book form. The occurrences and incidents mentioned, beginning almost ninety years ago and running down to 1883, will, I hope, prove interesting to my kindred and others who may read them, although somewhat awkwardly expressed.













